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ABSTRACT

The English department administrators for five colleges and universities in a midwestern metropolitan area were surveyed for information on the hiring of part-time faculty. The survey determined the proportion of part-time composition instruction to the total hours of composition instruction for each institution and the proportion of "cross-town" instruction (part-time teaching at more than one institution during a term) to the total part-time composition instruction. Contrary to the researchers' predictions, the results indicated the following: (1) the phenomenon of cross-town teaching was not widespread; (2) most cross-town adjunct faculty taught at only two institutions; (3) there were several distinct pools of faculty members from which specific schools hired, rather than one large pool; (4) the administrators surveyed were extremely cooperative in supplying the names of their part time faculty; and (5) the administrators did not place constraints on their part time faculty by limiting the number of institutions at which they could teach in any given term. The results suggest that cross-town teaching poses no problem for administrators. (HTH)

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# Teaching Underground: A Study of Cross-Town, Part-Time Teachers

Timothy E. Dykstra

This evening's gathering, a growing number of articles and surveys in our professional literature, and various committees formed by our professional organizations all attest to the emerging discussion of the adjunct faculty member in the composition teaching profession. I hope to contribute to that discussion tonight, but in a slightly different way.

As I read much of the material concerning part time faculty members, I was disappointed by the relative lack of specific information people used to support their various positions on the general question of part time faculty members and the best policies for them. I was also interested to hear frequent passing reference to but few facts on the phenomenon I choose to call the "Cross-towner", i.e., the adjuct faculty member who pieces together a more or less full time teaching load by working at more than one school in the same term. I thought it would be interesting to see if I could not tackle both of these issues--the lack of hard data, and the Cross-towner--in a single study. I'd like to report my findings to you this evening.

## SURVEY BOUNDARIES

I chose to study a fairly limited subject area in order to keep the information controlable. Here are the characteristics of the study area I used.

- The survey was be limited to English composition (or predominately composition) classes only. Literature classes, individualized studies projects, ESL programs, and writing laboratories that did not meet as formal class sections were excluded.

- The survey was be limited to a metropolitan region. I assumed that cross-towners needed a fairly sizeable community to work in almost by definition. I assumed further that cross-towners did not cover long distances (e.g., more than thirty miles or so) during the same term.

- I selected only one region for the intiial study. For convenience, I choose the Columbus, Ohio, metropolitan area. Whether this area is a typical or an atypical metropolitan area for our profession remains to be proven. It was not selected because it was assumed to be typical.

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CS 208 154

- I wished to cover all of the colleges and universities in that area, both state and private. I did not include the proprietary schools or a local art college, however.

- I studied staffing for the Fall, 1983, term only. I ignored people's claims like, "This is an unusual Fall for us. We normally have more [less] faculty in the Winter [Spring]." I also made no attempt to "balance out" staffing arrangements a given school makes over the course of an entire academic year.

- I defined a part-time faculty member in this way. Anyone who did not have an annual contract or longer, who was not a tenure track faculty member, and who was not a teaching associate (or other similarly-designated graduate student) was a part-time faculty member. This definition of a part timer includes, therefore, some persons who might conceivably be teaching a full load this past term, like a lecturer, or an instructor. This definition seemed to suit the hiring practices in the area best, however.

## SURVEY METHODOLOGY

1. I identified the schools to include in the survey. The list included one large state university and five smaller state and private institutions. Their names and approximate Fall, 1983, enrollments are listed below.

| NAME | ESTIMATED ENROLLMENT |
|---|---|
| Ohio State Univ. | 53,000 |
| Columbus Technical Institute | 8,000 |
| Franklin Univ. | 5,000 |
| Capital Univ. | 2,000 |
| Otterbein College | 1,500 |
| Ohio Dominican College | 1,000 |

I received information from all the above schools except the last.

2. I contacted the departmental administrator in each school and requested the following information:

-how many composition courses are being taught Fall, 1983;
-how many credit hours does each course carry;
-how many sections of ecah course are being offered;
-how many sections are being taught by full-time faculty, part-time faculty, or teaching associates;
-what are the names of the part-time instructors?

In so doing I specifically assured the administrators that no names of individual instructors would be used in the final report. I needed and was interested in the names solely to identify cross-towners.

3. I calculated the proportion of part time composition instruction to the total composition instruction of each institution.

4. I identified all instructors whose names appeared on the staff rosters of more than one school.

5. I calculated the proportion of cross town instruction to the total part time composition instruction in the area.

## SURVEY FINDINGS

Before I describe the actual findings, I think it is only fair to confess that I did not begin the study from a fully neutral and/or objective perspective. I had some very specific a priori notions which I want to describe.

1. I assumed that the phenomenon of cross town teaching by adjunct faculty members was widespread throughout the commmunity, varying from one institution to another only in terms of the size of the schools.

2. I assumed that several cross town faculty members would teach at more than two institutions. I expected to learn that people taught at as many as three or four schools at the same time.

3. I assumed that there was one large pool of individuals (formed primarily by Ohio State University) from which all institutions drew in the same way. I did not assume that there would be more or less distinct pools of faculty members for specific schools, in other words.

4. I assumed that the administrators of the various programs would be highly suspicious of my questions and that I would have a very difficult time getting the exact names of the faculty members from them.

5. I assumed that the administrators would look at my research as an opportunity to place some constraints on their part-time faculty members by placing a limit to the number of schools an individual could work at at the same time, or in some similar manner.

Those were my major assumptions going into the study. To my surprise, when I studied the data from the research, EVERY ONE of those assumptions was wrong! I can perhaps best summarize the

findings I did make by describing the errors in the above assumptions.

1. Cross town teaching by adjunct faculty members in Columbus, Ohio, is not at all widespread. In fact, cross towners account for only 6% of all the composition sections being taught by part-time instructors and only 3% of the total number of composition sections being offered Fall, 1983. Of the nearly one hundred part-time composition instructors only six taught at more than one institution.

   Furthermore, although every school did make use of part-time instructors for at least one section, institutions did not use them the same way. The type of program a given institution had seemed to influence how much it used or did not use adjuncts more than anything else. Size of the institution had relatively little to do with it, it seems. Commuter schools, for example, made much heavier use of part time faculty than did residential schools.

2. The little cross town teaching that did occur was always limited to two and only two schools. Of the 95 part-time faculty members teaching compostion in Columbus this fall, not one taught at three or more institutions.

3. Although I have not studied the matter thoroughly, each school seems to have its own separate pool of part time instructors from which to draw. While the cross town teaching that did occur tended to involve people from Ohio State the most frequently, the number of them is so small that it is insignficant.

4. I had no difficulty at all getting the information I needed from the administrators. They were highly cooperative. Although they appreciated my telling them that names of individual faculty members would remain confidential, none of them made that a precondition for sharing staff rosters. This high degree of cooperation may bode well for other studies people may wish to do, on salary issues, and on similar studies around the country.

5. While each administrator expressed interest in the results of the survey, none gave me any impression that the report would be used as a vehicle for applying administrative restrictions on his or her adjunct faculty. I got quite the opposite impression. Each administrator seemed to hold a genuine interest in the well being of his or her staff member. I sensed a difference in people's perspecitves at times between how they saw "the part-timer question" in the abstract and how they viewed their own faculty members.

The attached tables highlight the findings for each school providing data. Table I presents an overall summary with totals for each school and for the Columbus area. Table II breaks down the totals for the schools into specific course offerings.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Cross town teaching is not a significant issue this fall in Columbus, Ohio. Not enough of it takes place for it to be a problem, and that which does take place is being done with the full knowledge and consent of the affected administrators. While conducting this study, I heard from some individual faculty members that I shouldn't conduct such a project because it could well jepordize the already-shaky employment situation for the cross town adjuncts. I have discovered no tangible evidence to support this fear. The administrators seemed to consider the fact that a faculty member was teaching somewhere else as an asset rather than a liability.

2. Since I did not prove the existence of a problem which I had assumed existed, I must also defer for the time being proposing a solution to that problem. It's foolish to waste energy solving problems that do not exist.

   (I had been working on an idea for "legitamizing" the cross-towner in the eyes of a disapproving administrator through a joint appointment system wherein schools sharing a significant number of part-time faculty members would agree to create a full-time equivalent postions for the adjunct, sort of a "circuit riding" faculty member.)

3. I think this project raises as many questions as it answers and that a number of additional research projects could and should be undertaken. Specifically, these questions remain unanswered.

   - Is the situation regarding cross town adjuncts in Columbus, Ohio, Fall, 1983, typical, or are there other regions of the country where the problem does exist? Would a similar study in a large, eastern, metropolitan area like New York City yield different results, for example?

   - Would a study of the Columbus, Ohio, area that extended over several terms yield different results? If fall, 1983, truly is atypical, what are the trends that a year-long or an even longer study might show?

   - What really are the attitudes toward cross-towners by each of several affected groups, by cross-

towners themselves, by other adjuncts, by full-time faculty members, and by program administrators?

Each of these questions needs to be answered thoroughly and with valid information before we can claim to have a real understanding of the cross-town adjunct instructor and what policies are best for the interests of both the institution and the instructor.

TABLE I

SUMMARY OF COMPOSITION CLASSES IN
COLUMBUS, OHIO, FALL, 1983

| SCHOOL | TOTAL # OF SECTIONS | TOTAL # OF F.T. | TOTAL # OF T.A. | TOTAL # OF P.T. | TOTAL # OF T.A. + P.T. | % P.T. OF TOTAL SECTIONS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OHIO STATE UNIV. | 216 | 18 | 110 | 85 | 195 | 39% |
| COL'S TECH. INST. | 111 | 25 | 0 | 86 | 86 | 77% |
| FRANKLIN UNIV. | 34 | 14 | 0 | 20 | 20 | 59% |
| CAPITAL UNIV. | 9 | 7 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 22% |
| OTTERBEIN COLLEGE | 23 | 20 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 13% |
| OHIO DOMINICAN COLLEGE | Information Not Available | | | | | |
| COLUMBUS TOTALS | 393 | 43 | 110 | 196 | 306 | 50% |

TOTAL NUMBER OF PART TIME PERSONS 95
TOTAL NUMBER OF CROSS-TOWNERS 6

TOTAL NUMBER OF SECTIONS TAUGHT BY ALL PART-TIMERS 196
TOTAL NUMBER OF SECTIONS TAUGHT BY CROSS-TOWNERS 6

PERCENTAGE OF ALL OFFERRED SECTIONS BY CROSS-TOWNERS 3%
PERCENTAGE OF PART-TIMER'S SECTIONS BY CROSS-TOWNERS 6%

SCHOOLS THAT "SHARED" CROSS-TOWNERS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| OHIO STATE UNIV. ---- | FRANKLIN UNIV. | 1 PERSON |
| OHIO STATE UNIV. ---- | COL'S TECH. INST. | 2 PERSONS |
| OHIO STATE UNIV. ---- | CAPITAL UNIV. | 1 PERSON |
| FRANKLIN UNIV. ---- | COL'S TECH. INST. | 2 PERSONS |
| | TOTAL | 6 PERSONS |

TABLE II

COMPOSITION CLASSES IN
COLUMBUS, OHIO, FALL 1983

| SCHOOL | COURSE NAME | TOTAL # OF SECTIONS | TOTAL # OF F.T. | TOTAL # OF T.A. | TOTAL # OF P.T. | TOTAL # OF T.A. + P.T. | % P.T. OT TOTAL SECTIONS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OHIO STATE UNIV. | FROSH COMP. | 101 | 2 | 94 | 5 | 99 | 5% |
| | FROSH COMP/ LIT. | 6 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 33% |
| | SOPH. COMP. | 5 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 33% |
| | SENR. COMP. | 12 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 42% |
| | BUS.& PROF. WRTG | 9 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 55% |
| | TECH. WRTG | 21 | 4 | 4 | 13 | 17 | 62% |
| | WRTG WSHP | 62 | 4 | 7 | 51 | 58 | 82% |
| OSU TOTALS | | 216 | 18 | 110 | 85 | 195 | 39% |
| CAP. UNIV. | INTRO TO WRTG | 8 | 6 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 25% |
| | NEWS WRTG | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| CAP. TOTALS | | 9 | 7 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 22% |

TABLE II CONTINUED

COMPOSITION CLASSES IN
COLUMBUS, OHIO, FALL, 1983

| SCHOOL | COURSE NAME | TOTAL # OF SECTIONS | TOTAL # OF F.T. | TOTAL # OF T.A. | TOTAL # OF P.T. | TOTAL # OF T.A. + P.T. | % P.T. OT TOTAL SECTIONS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| COL'S TECH. INST. | LANG DEV. | 25 | 2 | 0 | 23 | 23 | 92% |
| | BGIN COMP. | 38 | 10 | 0 | 28 | 28 | 74% |
| | ESSAY & RESH | 26 | 4 | 0 | 22 | 22 | 85% |
| | TECH. WRTG | 8 | 4* | 0 | 4 | 4 | 50% |
| | BUS. COMP. | 14 | 5 | 0 | 9 | 9 | 64% |
| CTI TOTALS | | 111 | 25 | 0 | 86 | 86 | 77% |
| | *video tape classes | | | | | | |
| FRANKLIN UNIV. | BW I | 4 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 75% |
| | BW II | 9 | 2 | 0 | 7 | 7 | 78% |
| | COLL WRTG | 12 | 7 | 0 | 5 | 5 | 42% |
| | NEWS WRTG | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 100% |
| | REPT WRTG | 7 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 43% |
| FRANKLIN TOTALS | | 34 | 14 | 0 | 20 | 20 | 59% |

TABLE II CONTINUED

COMPOSITION CLASSES IN
COLUMBUS, OHIO, FALL, 1983

| SCHOOL | COURSE NAME | TOTAL # OF SECTIONS | TOTAL # OF F.T. | TOTAL # OF T.A. | TOTAL # OF P.T. | TOTAL # OF T.A. + P.T. | % P.T. OF TOTAL SECTIONS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OTTER-BEIN COLL. | FROSH SEM. | 14 | 13 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 7% |
| | FROSH COMP/ LIT | 7 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| | EVEN. FROSH SEM. | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 100% |
| OTTER-BEIN COLL. TOTALS | | 23 | 20 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 13% |